

walks of life". I have no reason at all to doubt the sincerity of the Hon. Member when he spoke those words. He does believe them. He is an honourable man, principled and upright in every respect. I have to point out to the House that nowhere in the speech of the Parliamentary Secretary in introducing Bill C-92 did he give even passing lip service to the concerns of northern native peoples, the Indian or the Dene, the Inuit and the Metis.

He said in his speech that there is concern for all Canadians in all regions, and yet he neglected any reference to these important people north of 60. They have to be mentioned whenever we talk about gas and oil development, whenever we talk about development of the non-renewable resources north of 60.

This legislation, Bill C-92, proceeds almost as if these people did not exist. Of course, as I started out by saying, the previous Bill this one will replace did exactly the same thing. In that regard, and in my own defence, I only want to point out that the Liberal Government's Canada Oil and Gas Act was promulgated in March of 1982. The Special Committee on Indian Self-Government did not report to Parliament until November of 1983. During the period of time that Members of Parliament for all political parties were working on that report of the Special Committee a great deal was learned by those Members. There was a good deal of sensitization to the reality of the rights and claims of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

I came to believe that, following the tabling of that report, those Members of Parliament, and I believe a growing number of other Members of Parliament, will never again have exactly the same perspective on public policy issues that in any way at all touch upon the rights and the prerogatives of native people.

It was for this reason that I was surprised that the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of State for Mines, who gave the opening speech in this debate, did not put something into his speech with respect to aboriginal peoples and their rights. I say that because we were privileged to have him serve on various occasions on that Special Committee, and his contribution was in no way small.

Talking about that report of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government, making it apropos to C-92, let me just quote one small section. On page 111 it says the following:

The resolution of land and rights disputes in the territories is an opportunity and obligation for the present generation to be generous and honest and to ensure that the indigenous people of the north are the primary beneficiaries of development there, with a fair share of resources now and in the future.

That is from the special committee's report.

I return now to the speech by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary who pointed out to the House that the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act, which will replace the Canada Oil and Gas Act, will have a simplified and fair set of rules designed to encourage exploration success in Canada's frontier regions. He said these rights will guide Governments and the petroleum industry to the exploration and development of

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Canada's frontier and offshore resources. Then the Parliamentary Secretary told the House that the competitive bidding system will ensure maximum return. That is what he said, maximum return to Canadians as resource owners.

With great respect, I must remind the Parliamentary Secretary, and also the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney), that the question of ownership of resources north of 60 is an unsettled matter. It is part of and central to the settlement of aboriginal claims.

• (1510)

In his speech, the Parliamentary Secretary told us that Bill C-92 respects the rights of companies, regardless of their nationality. However, nowhere did he say that it respects the rights of aboriginal peoples, those who claim right and title to those lands north of 60 that have never been surrendered. There is no document available anywhere in the archives that shows that an act of surrender took place. Aboriginal rights in that part of Canada have never been extinguished. If we now take the enlightened approach that is available to us, we will no longer hear about the extinguishment of the rights of aboriginal people since we recognize that their rights have now been enshrined in the Constitution of Canada.

However, when I listened to the Parliamentary Secretary's speech, it just seemed to confirm for me the assertion of Professor Dacks who said that from the federal point of view:

The North must serve the strategic and the economic needs of southern Canada. Northern megaprojects create southern jobs, investment opportunities, markets for Canadian manufacturers, much-needed tax and royalty revenues—

To quote the Parliamentary Secretary, this Bill is designed "to enhance the profitability of companies operating in the high cost and high risk frontier regions". I take strong exception to the Parliamentary Secretary's view that Bill C-92 introduces a balanced framework for the development of Canada's frontier lands. He pointed out in his speech that it is fair to provincial and territorial Governments and to all Canadians as resource owners. He said that the Bill is not only market responsive, it is internationally competitive and sensitive to commercial concerns of companies operating in the high risk frontier regions of the country. This may or may not be true. Those are very difficult and complex questions, most of which I will have to leave to our able energy critic, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan). The Parliamentary Secretary and the Government for whom he spoke failed to comprehend the central issue of aboriginal rights in relation to Bill C-92. In my opinion, this casts very serious doubts on the validity of the legislation we are debating today.

Let me move away from the Parliamentary Secretary's speech and turn to the Bill itself, and the Minister's statement and accompanying documents of October 30 last year, to discover whether what the Parliamentary Secretary neglected to say is mentioned anywhere at all. It is mentioned, but only parenthetically. It is in no way central to the principle of this Bill. Clause 3 states: